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# DEVELOPMENT OF YOUTH IN URBAN INDUSTRIAL SOCIETY

W. K. Kellogg Foundation  
50th Anniversary Lecture

by

James S. Coleman  
University of Chicago

Delivered at the Invitational  
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for State 4-H Leaders

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National 4-H Center  
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Nationwide 4-H Staff Development Program



SEA/Extension,  
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of Agriculture  
National 4-H Council





Dr. James S. Coleman, an eminent educational researcher and theorist, is a member of the Department of Sociology at the University of Chicago, where he served as assistant professor from 1956 to 1959. A graduate of Purdue University, Dr. Coleman holds a Ph.D. in Sociology from Columbia University. While serving as associate professor of the Department of Social Relations at Johns Hopkins University from 1959 to 1973, Dr. Coleman involved the 4-H staff in Extension, USDA, and at the National 4-H Foundation (now National 4-H Council) in the design and piloting of educational games such as "Democracy" and "Community Response," developed especially for 4-H. He was one of 15 world-renowned educators brought together in 1968 by Extension to dialogue on the role of the Land-Grant University in dealing with youth development needs and concerns. He is the author of more than 100 journal articles and 15 major books and monographs, including two widely recognized youth publications: *Adolescent Society and Youth* and *Transition to Adulthood*.



I want to speak today about a problem of increasing urgency and increasing importance in modern industrial society. It is a problem directly related to the goals of 4-H, but it is a problem that has not been fully solved by 4-H nor by any other institution in society. The problem can be simply stated: It is the failure to properly bring up our children so that they become adults who are happy with themselves, a source of strength for others, and productive for society as a whole.

Modern industrial society, for reasons that I will indicate shortly, is especially incapacitated for this central activity; and we have not yet found ways of overcoming the incapacity. The problem exists in all modern industrial societies; it is, however, especially pronounced in the United States because the factors which create it have come into being somewhat earlier than in other developed societies.

I speak to you about it today because 4-H is an institution expressly intended to help cope with this kind of problem. I say "this kind of problem" because the origins and original purposes of 4-H were somewhat different, focusing to be sure on the development of children and youth into healthy adulthood, but focusing especially on that segment of youth most removed from what we would refer to as "modern industrial society." It is in part this different focus of 4-H that has given it the extraordinary success it has had, and has also confronted it with difficult problems of the difference between "agriculturally-based communities" and "modern industrial society." But more of those difficulties later. Here I want only to note that the problem I will attempt to diagnose has much in common with the traditional focus of 4-H, but much that is different as well. And it is these differences that are especially relevant to the future potential of 4-H.

I will speak this morning as a sociologist; unfortunately for you I will use some sociological jargon, though I will try to spare you as much of that as I can. I want to do two things: first, to diagnose and analyze the sources of the problem that I have described, and second, to indicate the shape and character that solutions of the problem must take. Although I will not discuss specific 4-H programs, existing or potential, it is this second part of what I will say that will have direct relevance for the way that 4-H attempts to deal with American youth in the coming years.

### **Urban-industrial vs. agriculturally based society**

Urban industrial society differs from an agriculturally-based society in a number of important ways. Some of these have special relevance for the socialization of children and youth. (I warned you that I would use some sociological jargon; "socialization" is exactly that. I use it to refer to the whole set of activities through which children are brought through youth into adulthood; and it is merely a useful shorthand for referring to these activities.)

Urban industrial society consists largely of a "built" environment, in contrast to a natural environment. It is a built environment in two ways. First and most obvious, most of the physical environment is artificially constructed, not created by nature. The most striking difference between a built environment and a natural environment, from the point of view of socialization, is that there is no *life* in a built environment. It isn't born, it doesn't grow, it's not alive. This is an important difference for children and youth—not in the superficial way that many people would note. That is the fact that children who grow up in a built environment cannot so easily learn about growth, life and death, natural development of living things. I don't believe that's true. They can learn, cognitively, about the extraordinary processes of nature from television, books, and in other secondary ways. But in a built environment, without life, children are much less likely to be able to have the companionship of living things.

What I mean is this: That surrounded by living things, children and youth form attachments to some of these living things, sometimes as pets, sometimes merely as friends. Why is this important for socialization? For a single reason: Children need warm close relationships, bonds with others who need them. Yet often they are not good at establishing



relationships, and their parents or other adults in their environment are not ideal companions. Many children create imaginary companions to fill this need; for girls, dolls have traditionally helped fill the need, for many girls vest their dolls with real live imaginary personalities. But the need is not well filled by mere imagination or by non-living things. It is well filled by living things, animals who are not threatening, not demanding, but responsive to a child's attention, care, love, and warmth, and tolerant of mistakes.

This need is particularly strong for children who have special problems in relating to other persons. They are often able to form relationships with these unthreatening, undemanding but responsive living beings. I recently read of a 4-H program in a suburban high school involving the hatching of quail eggs. After the quail eggs hatched, the children made pets of the quail, and in particular, one boy who had been withdrawn gained his pet quail to sit on his desk during class. According to the description of what happened, this special and successful relationship, the tiny bird responsive to him and perched on his desk, drew this boy out of himself, helped make him more to his peers more easily and confidently than before. This is, of course, not a simple example. One of the reasons for the success of a 4-H program with handicapped or emotionally disturbed children, the horseback riding program that has been developed is exactly the same. A child who has problems coping with a demanding human can gain confidence by bringing about a response from a horse in whose eyes he is no different from others. And undoubtedly this same process has been going on though largely unrecognized, for the thousands of 4-H youths who have had the project, raising a calf or a pig or a sheep from birth to maturity, as their 4-H project. On the other side of the question, the unfilled need for responsive and unthreatening companionship of a living being who needs them has been a major reason why teenage girls want to have their babies. Such pregnancies, and such babies, are "mental." They fill a need for a young girl not unlike the need of the boy who has his quail sitting on his desk at school. It is often true that the girl soon finds her life more constraining and demanding than she had anticipated; but this is after the

### corporate actors

One of the major importance for socialization about the built environment is that it is with living things which can be responsive companions for children and youth. Other changes as well that have taken place in urban industrial society, have brought about a more barren psychic environment for children and the past. And these changes have arisen through the second sense in which urban industrial society is a "built" environment. In a rural, largely agricultural setting, most of a person's interactions and contacts are with other persons as persons. Not so in urban, industrial society. A large number of every person's interactions are with large, impersonal others, not human beings at all, but what sociologists call "corporate actors." These are business firms, city departments, state and federal agencies, trade unions, mass communications media, large stores, and a myriad of other organizations. To be sure, one may actually speak to another person acting as an agent for that corporate actor: a store clerk, a government official, a personnel officer. But this is not a contact with the other person as person; rather, that person is merely an agent for the impersonal corporate actor in whose name he speaks.

This change from a society in which nearly all a person's interactions were with other persons, to one in which a large fraction are with impersonal corporate actors, is a change that has been occurring over many years, since the beginning of the industrial revolution. In urban America, it has reached an advanced stage. It has drawn adults largely away from family and neighborhood interactions, into those that take place in the industrial economy. It did so first for men, drawing the man's productive activities away from the household and into what could be called the corporate world. Women, left behind in a household



# The Seaman A. Knapp Lecture

*“Applying Seaman Knapp’s  
Ideals in the  
New Millennium”*

November 16, 1997









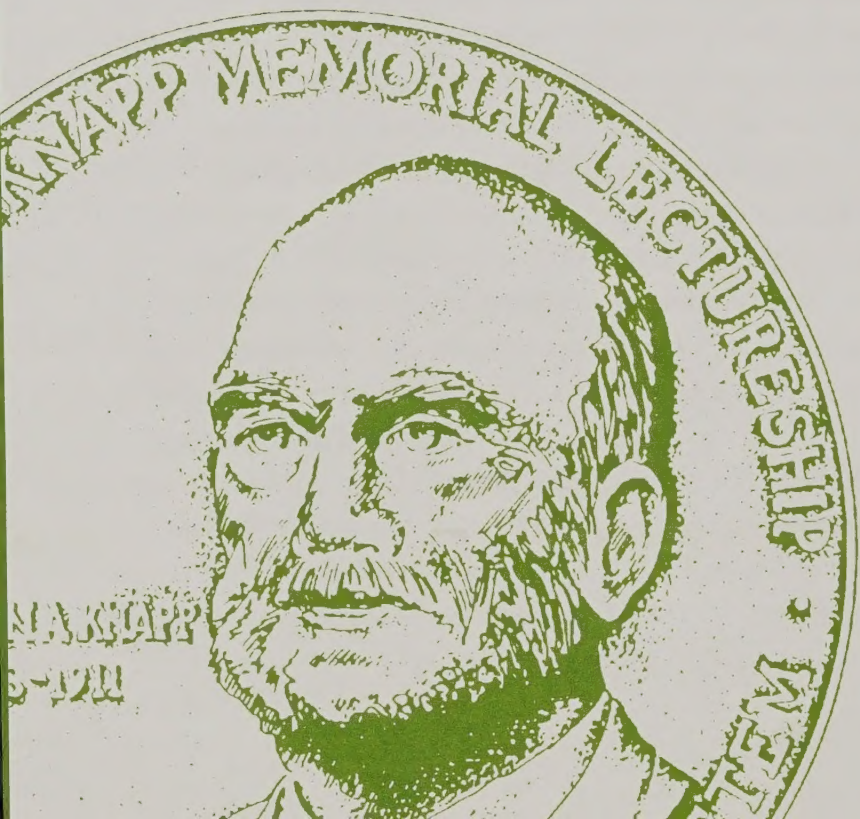
## The Seaman A. Knapp Lecture



*The Cooperative State Research Education and Extension Service, USDA, sponsors the prestigious Seaman A. Knapp Memorial Lecture to commemorate the life and work of Dr. Seaman A. Knapp -the father of the Cooperative Extension concept. Knapp's success as a national leader of the farm and home demonstration system helped bring about the Smith-Lever Act of 1914, which resulted in organization of a Cooperative Extension Service in every state.*

*The Knapp Memorial Lecture series is also a living tribute to the proud history of the Cooperative Extension System. As the System examines the evolving global political and economic scenario and changing technology, it is fitting that the 1997 lecture, given by Dr. Charles B. Knapp looks at challenges facing Extension by addressing "Applying Seaman Knapp's Ideals in the New Millennium."*

*Dr. Knapp is the seventh Knapp lecturer. The series began in 1980 at the annual meeting of the National Association of State Universities and Land-Grant Colleges with Lester Brown, President of Worldwatch Institute, as the first lecturer. Other recipients of this distinguished honor have been Russell G. Mawby (1983), Chairman of the Board and Chief Executive Officer of the W. K. Kellogg Foundation; E. T. York (1984), Chancellor Emeritus, State University System of Florida; Max Lennon (1988), President, Clemson University, Clemson, SC; and Gerald W. Thomas (1991), Past President of New Mexico State University, Dr. Albert C. Yates, President of Colorado State University.*







## Charles B. Knapp Biographical Sketch

*Dr. Charles B. Knapp became the President of the Aspen Institute on July 1, 1997. The Aspen Institute is an international nonprofit educational institution dedicated to enhancing the quality of leadership through informed dialogue. It convenes men and women who represent diverse viewpoints and backgrounds to relate timeless ideas and values to the foremost challenges facing societies, organizations, and individuals.*

*In addition to continuing the renown great books seminars, in the last year the Institute has conducted high profile meetings and policy analysis on issues ranging from the Balkan peace process and the impact of Islam on U.S. foreign policy to workforce issues in the next century. The magazine "The Economist" succinctly captured the value of the Aspen experience with it stated: "Magic mountain of the mind.. If you are invited drop everything and go."*

*Prior to assuming the Presidency of the Aspen Institute, Knapp served for ten years as the President and Professor of Economics at the University of Georgia. Dr Knapp's tenure at Georgia was marked by rapidly rising academic standards at both the graduate and undergraduate levels, sharply increased research expenditures, and ambitious program of new construction and successful private fund raising.*

*Dr. Knapp was the Senior Vice President and then the Executive Vice President of Tulane University from 1982 to 1987. He was previously a faculty member at the University of Texas at*

*Austin, from 1972-76, and served during the Carter Administration first as Special Assistant to the U.S Secretary of Labor for Employment and Training. From 1981 to 1982, he held a visiting faculty appointment at the George Washington University.*

*Dr. Knapp was born in Ames, Iowa in 1946 and received his B. S. degree (with honors and distinction) from Iowa State University in 1968 and his M.A. and Ph.D degrees in Economics from the University of Wisconsin-Madison in 1972. In 1994 he was awarded the Distinguished Achievement Citation (highest alumni award) by Iowa State. Knapp also serves on the Board of AFLAC, Inc., a Columbus, Georgia based supplemental insurance company. He and his wife Lynne, live in Washington, DC*

**September 1997**



# *“Applying Seaman Knapp’s Ideals in the New Millennium”*

## The Seaman A. Knapp Lecture

*Presented by*

**Charles B. Knapp**

at the Annual Meeting of the  
National Association of  
State Universities and  
Land-Grant Colleges

Washington, DC

**November 16, 1997**



Good morning, and thank you for that most kind introduction. I am deeply honored to have been asked to speak to you today.

At one level, even though I have been gone only a very brief period of time, it will, I'm sure, always be a distinct pleasure to return to this annual meeting of the National Association of State Universities and Land-grant Colleges. It does, however, feel a bit odd to be something of an outsider here today after attending these meetings so regularly for more than a decade.

There is more, though, that brings me back to you today than just a short burst of nostalgia. I am a product of the great land-grant universities, having graduated from Iowa State and Wisconsin and having enjoyed the opportunity to lead a third: the University of Georgia. I will say quite simply that I would not be standing here today were it not for the uniquely American tradition of

broad-based educational opportunity as perhaps best embodied in the land-grant tradition.

In addition, I have enjoyed immensely the chance to be of some service to this association, especially so during the tenure of its most able president, Peter Magrath.

The other reason I am so pleased to have this opportunity, of course, is that Seaman Asahel Knapp, the father of the Cooperative Extension Service, after whom this lecture is named, was my great-great grandfather. Other than within the venue of a family reunion, one is rarely asked to talk about one's relatives!

It is always a challenge to try to interpret the legacy of a unique individual such as Seaman Knapp, and it may be uniquely difficult if that individual is the scion of your own family, where observation and interpretation are inevitably colored by multiple and often rose-colored layers of

family folklore. But I will give it a try today.

I was raised in Iowa, where Seaman Knapp spent a great deal of his working life, and later worked in Texas, Louisiana and other parts of the south where his influence was most particularly felt. In these different environments, my perceptions of my great-great grandfather have grown and changed over the years.

As a young boy I remember the colorful images conjured up when my own grandfather told that among his earliest recollections were riding on a train across east Texas with his grandfather in 1903. I remember my grandfather's characterization of this trip as "no holiday." Seaman Knapp was by most recollections pretty much all business and he made it clear that "young" Seaman, his grandson — my grandfather, was along to do some serious learning.

The business of Seaman Knapp on this particu-



lar trip was especially important. He was going out to start one of the nation's first demonstration farms in Terrell, Texas. He had been commissioned by the U.S. Department of Agriculture to establish a community demonstration farm to show farmers how cotton could be raised to resist the plague of the boll weevil, which had devastated the region's principal crop and its profits.

As a teenager, tales of my great-great grandfather's friendship with James "Tama Jim" Wilson, who became U.S. Secretary of Agriculture during the administration of President William McKinley, were passed around the family dinner table.

Seaman Knapp and "D" became friends after Knapp moved from his native New York state to Iowa shortly after the civil war. There Knapp began to nurture a developing interest in agriculture, in 1872 publishing "The Western Stock Journal and Farmer" out of Cedar Rapids.

Wilson and Knapp were friends of Henry Wallace, the publisher of "Wallace's Farmer," and these three men formed a powerful triumvirate which would profoundly impact agriculture in this country. In addition to Wilson becoming secretary of agriculture, Wallace's son, Henry C. Wallace and grandson, Henry A. Wallace, subsequently occupied that high office.

In 1898, when he was 65 — the age at which most of us decide to wind down our life's work — Seaman Knapp embarked upon yet another great adventure. He accepted the request of "Tama Jim" to travel to China, Japan and the Philippines to investigate rice varieties, production and milling. He operated on this mission with an exotic yet reportedly official title that I will always envy — "Agricultural Explorer."

The findings from his trip resulted in a significant change in the way rice was grown in the

U.S. and a subsequent expansion of the rice industry, and his later acceptance of yet another new job title, that of President of the Rice Grower's Association of America.

As an undergraduate at Iowa State, I was around campus buildings and streets bearing the Knapp name. Seaman Knapp served Iowa State as Professor of Agriculture and manager of the farm, and later became the second president of the university. Some unkind among you have at times speculated that Seaman Knapp's fall from professor to president was the first surfacing of a tragic genetic flaw in the Knapp family that later sealed my own fate.

In the course of my career I began to piece together these remembrances and do research on my own about Seaman Knapp. I discovered some very interesting aspects of my great-great grandfather's work - and values - which I believe are as

important today as they were nearly 100 years ago when he set up that demonstration farm in Texas. It is these lessons I wish to speak to you about today.

Most importantly, and the central message I would like to leave with you today, is that Seaman Knapp was a visionary, someone who worked within the system and brought about change and innovation. Change, we accept more clearly today, is essential to progress. But this tenet was not widely accepted a hundred years ago. In fact, strict adherence to tradition and standard practice was much more the rule of the day. Seaman Knapp was among the first to recognize that change is a friend, not an enemy.

When the boll weevil threatened to decimate a major portion of the economy of the South, he applied knowledge — gained through research — and reached out to the farmers, encouraging



them to abandon their previous methods of cotton farming and try new techniques. He was confident that not only would cotton production be restored, but unabashedly predicted that production would be increased.

Through this experience he realized that agricultural production could best be diversified and improved — and the economy strengthened — by actual object lessons. This practice is now deeply a part of the way complicated problems are approached, in both agricultural and other subjects, in America and around the world. But in his era, a hundred years ago, this way of approaching problems was not widely accepted.

It was through this vision that the concept of cooperative extension was born. Knapp's vision was his greatest gift, and one which would make Russ Mawby, who delivered this Seaman Knapp lecture in 1987, describe my great-great grandfather as a "pragmatic dreamer."

Like all visionaries, he was not only inspired but was able to inspire. As an educator, he instructed and motivated others. When I think of him, I am reminded of the words of William Arthur Ward, the American journalist, who said "the mediocre teacher tells. The good teacher explains. The superior teacher demonstrates. The great teacher inspires."

At the age of 70, when he now most certainly could have been retired, Knapp, with energy and insight, was able to inspire and mobilize a corps of assistants to embark upon a state-wide crusade in Texas for diversified farming. He came up with a novel concept for his time — a unique information delivery system — sending his aides across the state of Texas on the "lecture trains", that later became so popular across the country, to explain and demonstrate new methods to farmers.

If Seaman Knapp were alive today, I know that

he would be energized by all the changes impacting agriculture, in its broadest definition as a science which includes not only food and animal production, but also the processing and marketing of these products, the manufacturing of machinery and chemicals used in this activity and the balanced and sustainable use of resources.

He would see the scientific, economic and political developments of our time as opportunities to make new, creative connections. He would find the revolution in biotechnology, enabling us to breed new resistant strains of crops and to clone animals, to have vast potential. I know that he would find the new modes of communication — from the retrieval capabilities of the Internet to the ability to send information from the field to a computer for analysis via satellite technology— to be astounding. And, I am sure that he would look upon the challenges of agribusiness

in a global economy to be a unique opportunity.

I now have the great honor to head the Aspen Institute, an organization which, since its founding in the unsettled days after World War II, has been devoted to developing leadership that can respond to change which comes at us now at a pace that Seaman Knapp could never have imagined.

There are some who, over the years, have tried to put my great-great grandfather on a pedestal. I would rather remember him as squarely in the fray, the natural habitat of visionaries — out ahead, encouraging us to move on, to pick up our pace. Providing us with maps and signposts. Opening our eyes to the realities and possibilities of a changing world. Not being afraid to think innovatively and to be a force for change.

I regret to say that most of us concerned with the future of agriculture have not generally been given to accept and to take advantage of change.



This criticism is perhaps particularly applicable to land-grant university institutions such as the Cooperative Extension Service and Agricultural Experiment stations. When we have been challenged about how we are responding to change, particularly in the pervasive context of tighter public funding, the response all too often has been to circle the wagons and fire inward.

There is much I cannot speculate on about the legacy of Seaman Knapp, but I can say this — if he were faced with the environment we have today, he would not be defensive, but instead he would be furiously looking for ways he could take advantage of the situation to better our prospects.

How should we propose to lead this change? Allow me to spend the rest of the time we have this morning emphasizing some guideposts from Seaman Knapp's life work that still seem particularly applicable today.

First, lifelong learning. Seaman Knapp lived the concept of continuing education, constantly improving himself by learning. His education did not stop when he graduated from Union College in 1859. He believed, to quote Whitney Griswold, that "A college education is not a quantity of knowledge salted away in a file card. It is a taste for knowledge, a taste for philosophy if you will, a capacity to explore, to question, to perceive relationships between fields of knowledge and experience." Or, as Robert Hutchins, president of the University of Chicago and one of the founders of the Aspen Institute said: "The object of education is to prepare the young to educate themselves throughout their lives."

As educators, we must not only discharge our professional duties in such a manner that our students will be open to a life of learning, but we must also never stop learning ourselves. We live

in a world where, increasingly, the most vital commodity is information. With the burgeoning of the Internet and the access to information it can provide; with constant changes in computer technology and the expanding uses of that technology, the way we learn has undergone — and will continue to undergo — profound changes. How we use information, how we organize it, retrieve it and make it accessible to more people will continue to be a primary concern as we move into the next century.

As educators, our job is to prepare young people to live in this information age — to gain the skills that they will need to earn their living, to do their jobs using this new technology. The only way we can effectively pass on this knowledge is by continuing to learn ourselves - which will require making changes in the way we work and teach and live.

Second, experiential education. After the successful launch of the Cooperative Extension movement, Seaman Knapp extended his concept of learning by doing to young people. In 1906, he organized boy's cotton and corn growing clubs, and four years later, girls' canning and poultry clubs, the forerunners of today's 4-H clubs.

Quite simply, Seaman Knapp took the idea of experiential education and made it work. He lived his often quoted belief that, "What a man hears, he may doubt; what he sees, he may possibly doubt; but what he does, he cannot doubt."

This idea, now so fundamental to land-grant universities, must never be lost. The 4-H clubs are now an important — and encouraging— example, in fact, of an organization that has successfully adapted to the changing needs of our society. Originally targeted to young people in rural areas to help educate them in the skills they would



need to live and work in their community, 4-H has expanded its role and services in the late 20th century to include the educational needs of young people in urban as well as rural communities. Through outreach programs in literacy and science education, to name just two, partnering with public television and other learning organizations, 4-H has been able to help young men and women experience the varied and changing skills they need to function successfully in their lives.

Third, embracing technology. Seaman Knapp displayed an openness to the technology of his day - experimenting with rice production techniques, crop rotation, greater use of horsepower, better implements and other technological innovations of the time. What might he be working on were he alive today?

I am sure he would be interested in projects which constructively couple new technology

with unique information delivery systems. I'm thinking, for example, of the newly created Center for Urban Agriculture at the University of Georgia. The Center will have the capability to respond to consumers' questions about what we term the "Green industry" - landscaping and turf for commercial and private entities. The Center, which will have specialists linked electronically, will answer questions about turf, ornamentals and landscaping quickly and accurately, thanks to technology. Its digital diagnostic program uses a digital camera to send photos of insects and diseased plants over the web to entomologists and plant pathologists for rapid diagnosis. The system has the potential to more effectively utilize personnel, reach more clientele and respond more quickly to problems.

Fourth, global community. Adlai Stevenson once said that "the world at mid-century is like a

drum - strike it anywhere and it resounds everywhere." As we approach the end of this century, this is even more the case.

I applaud the efforts of the many county extension agents who have broadened their missions to communities abroad by taking extended working tours of foreign countries. Often, like my great-great grandfather, they return home, having received as much knowledge as they have imparted.

We must always be mindful that, to quote Michael Patton, writing in the *Journal of Extension*, "An international dimension is basic to effective extension programs. Not secondary. Not a luxury. Not an after-thought. Not an add-on."

The importance of our international agricultural markets, for example, cannot be underestimated. The United States at present sells twice as much food abroad as it imports. But our home agricultural markets have all been impacted by

the increase in produce imports, which have risen sharply in recent years, to 38 percent of the fruit consumed by Americans and 12 percent of the vegetables. The produce we export is now subject to ever higher and often quite stringent quality standards imposed by the European community and other nations such as Japan. For very basic economic reasons — if for no other — we must think globally in everything we do.

Fifth, community involvement. Walter Hines Page, former Ambassador to Britain and a contemporary of Seaman Knapp described my great-great grandfather as "one who kindled the spirit of service in every human being with whom he came into contact." That spirit of service — of neighbor helping neighbor within the local community — was a rural tradition born during the days of the early settlers. In our own century, we have seen this tradition blossom into volunteer-



ing, an activity in which the United States is a trend setter.

Just this spring, President Clinton called for a renewal of the nation's tradition of volunteerism. Gathering Colin Powell and other national leaders to a summit on volunteerism in Philadelphia, President Clinton urged America's leaders to strengthen and expand volunteer activities throughout the nation. But the sense of community service that must be a central principle of our land-grant philosophy cannot stop at our nation's border. We are all now members of a global community, and one of the lessons we have learned is that global events — such as natural disasters — affect all of us. As we could not turn our back on the flooding of our neighbors in the Great Plains earlier this year, we also cannot renege our responsibility toward earthquake victims in rural India, who will need our technology to rebuild their lives.

Sixth, innovation. One of Seaman Knapp's greatest strengths was his attitude that he would never let a problem stop him. He could make unlikely connections, take chances, and use resources wisely to find solutions. One of his special skills was accomplishing a project by breaking it down into tasks and then mobilizing the work force needed to carry out a goal.

At the time of his death in 1911, for example, Seaman Knapp had organized a field force of 700 instructors traveling throughout the South to help raise the level of agricultural production. In this manner, he could cover the territory as effectively as possible. This ability to create effective staffing solutions has special relevance for us today. In a time when many states are downsizing, we must look for imaginative new ways to improve efficiency without adding cost.

These guiding forces by which Seaman Knapp

lived his life are as relevant and timely today as they were in his era. We live and work in a country with the highest standard of living in the world, with unparalleled resources which afford us unique opportunities for change and growth. But the opportunities available to use are not enough if we do not use them well.

Toward the end of the 19th century, Thomas Huxley, the famous British scientist and educator, was invited to speak at Johns Hopkins University. A student asked Dr. Huxley what he thought of the 'bigness' of America, to which the English biologist replied, "I cannot say that I am in the slightest degree impressed by your 'bigness' or your material resources as such. Size is not grandeur, and territory does not make a nation. The great issue, about which hangs true sublimity and the terror of overhanging fate, is what are you going to do with all these things?"

My colleagues, I can do no less than encourage you to embrace the changes that will occur and put them to good use in expanding the scope and importance of land-grant universities in the next century. I believe that the elements which Seaman Knapp thought were so important at the founding of the Cooperative Extension movement — constant learning, adaptability to change and innovation — will be even more important in the coming century than they have been in this one. It now falls to us to apply these lessons wisely.

*Thank you.*



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denuded of the productive functions it had had throughout recorded history, found themselves in a psychically barren environment, and in part for this reason followed men into the corporate world where "the action" was. This has left the family even more denuded of functions and of the rich fabric of relations of which it has always consisted. The results can be seen in the current instability of the family, as measured by divorce rates, by numbers of runaway children, by rates of illegitimacy, by the diversity of types of non-family temporary liaisons and living arrangements.

Lower class "disadvantaged" children in the inner city fare better in some of these respects than middle class children in the suburbs; worse in other respects. There remain more of the family functions, a denser set of relationships, in the lower class inner city than in middle class suburbs, but there also exists the social disorganization, desertion by fathers, misshapen adult personalities, and social tension that low income has always brought. So on some counts the children of the aspetic suburbs are worse off in the psychological environments they face, and on some counts the children of the inner city poor are worse off.

But all are worse off in these respects than a child who is not a product of urban industrial society, but grows up in a rural setting where corporate actors have not replaced persons, and the household continues to contain the human relations that sustain healthy psychological growth.

The impact of this social structure of urban industrial society on young persons is not limited to relations within the family and household. It extends far beyond that. In particular, this corporate structure with its impersonal relations has taken away from the community the interests and activities of other adults outside the family on whom the growth and development of young persons depends. Adults who have both an interest in the development of youth and an opportunity to aid that development are no longer in abundance. One way this can be seen directly is the scarcity of volunteer youth leaders for scouting, for 4-H, for all youth-serving organizations. This scarcity exists, paradoxically, despite a current abundance of persons in the right age groups, that is, in their twenties and thirties, and more leisure time than ever before among these persons. Why? Again because in urban industrial society, these people are caught up in relationships spawned by that society: personal relationships tied to the workplace, from which children and youth are excluded, not to the community and neighborhood, where they are found; entertainment and leisure activities spawned by that same structure, that is, commercially generated entertainment aimed at the particular age group, not locally and informally-generated entertainment that encompasses a wide range of ages. The end result is the relative absence of adults other than parents who can aid youth and guide youth.

This change in structure is manifested in another way. In a rural agriculturally-based society, each young person is controlled not merely by parents but by the community as a whole. This is often galling to older youth in small communities, who find themselves restricted by the constant presence of community controls, in the form of other adults who know them and are interested in controlling what they are doing. This community control is a major reason why youth leave this setting to make their way in the impersonal city, where no one knows them and they can feel free. But the other side of the coin is that the absence of these community controls in urban industrial society leaves children and youth prey to those commercial interests in entertainment, in consumption of clothes, music, alcohol, and drugs, that arise in and are part of this urban industrial structure. These latter institutions, uncontrolled by, and not responsive to, the local community, are free to maximize their interests at the expense of the healthy development of youth.

### **Consequences for children and youth**

There are some consequences for children and youth of this changed social structure that are not readily apparent. For example, the conventional wisdom is that the broadened horizons and increased opportunities of urban industrial society have increased equality of



opportunity for youth from differing backgrounds. Certainly there is more attention of questions of "equal opportunity," and there are more efforts to bring it about in modern industrial society than has ever been true in rural agriculturally-based society. But just the opposite of the conventional wisdom is true. The diagnosis I have just given points directly to the fact that in urban industrial society a child's future—psychological health, moral development, and personality growth—depends more on that child's particular parents than in most agriculturally-based communities. Quite simply, there are fewer community and public resources outside the family available to children and youth. There is not the living environment, with its dumb animals who can provide, for the most deprived rural child, companionship, comfort, and the sense of being needed. There is a less rich human environment consisting of other adults who know the community's children, have some interest in what they do (quite for their own sake; I am not assuming greater altruism and human compassion in rural areas), who will exercise controls that keep them out of trouble, and who are sometimes available as youth leaders.

It is true, of course, that in some isolated rural areas, such community resources do not exist, and a child's moral and personal development is dependent on that child's own parents. This is the conventional wisdom: That rural settings provide less in the way of public resources than do urban ones. And as evidence, the range of museums, zoos, and other public institutions is ordinarily cited. But a zoo is a poor substitute for the living environment that can provide real relationships, and a museum is useless to a child unless there is another resource, an adult to take the child there.

There are some points of evidence concerning the extent of this difference in public resources in rural and urban settings. One of the most important is that of lower class rural migrants to lower class urban areas. In recent years, these migrants have been predominantly blacks from the rural South; in earlier days, they were whites from rural Europe or America to American cities. Research on the problems of youth crime, delinquency, and problems of adjustment shows that the core of the problem lies with the first generation of youth brought up in the urban environment. It is *not* the youth who spent their formative years in the rural setting and then were subject to the shock of the city. They do *not* show high rates of problem behavior, although one would expect the transition to be most sharp and difficult for them. It is the youth born and brought up in the city, for whom no transition at all has been necessary, who are the troubled children, the source of "youth problems."

And when sociologists look further for evidence about the cause, they find well-meaning but frustrated parents, brought up in rural areas under relatively strict controls, and wanting to raise their children well, who report being unable to cope with their children, and often unable to understand why they cannot cope. It is clear what has happened: unlike their own parents in raising them, these parents have no broader community resources of adults and adult institutions to support, reinforce, and supplement their own efforts. The rug has been pulled out from under them, so to speak, and they are left on their own in an environment which undermines their efforts. Many, confronted with this far more difficult task of socialization, are simply unable to carry it out. And their children are the victims—not of their parents' incapacities, but of the absence of community resources outside the family to augment the parents' efforts.

Thus, we have, through no one's intending it, but purely as a result of a changed social structure, an *increase* in inequality of opportunity for children and youth, each youth having an opportunity for development that depends more on the capabilities of that youth's own parents.

### **What is the response?**

With all this in mind, with an analysis and understanding of the problems for socialization that urban industrial society brings, what is the response? A first response must be that it is not possible to return to the past. Society is largely urban and industrial; it is no longer

agriculturally-based. What is necessary is to ask how healthy youth socialization can take place in this new society. While certain practices for youth which emerged naturally in rural America—and I include traditional 4-H club activities in this—can still thrive in those areas that remain agricultural and rural, these practices cannot be transported, unchanged, to this new and different social structure. Certainly 4-H has found this already, has made some changes for urban settings, and does not need a sociologist to tell them that these are two different social structures. But what I can do is to draw attention to certain implications of the diagnosis I have just given for potentials and policies in the urban industrial social structure.

First, one implication is for so-called “youth problems.” There are explicit social structural sources to these problems, and the appropriate policies are those which address causes rather than the resulting problems. If there is a high number of teen age pregnancies and resulting illegitimate children, the diagnosis I have given indicates that it is not sufficient merely to have widespread knowledge about contraception. For the diagnosis suggests that such knowledge will make no difference; that these children are born for a reason, and all the knowledge in the world about contraception won’t eliminate the reason. Yet government policies are based on the incorrect assumption that it will. Other government policies, and social concerns, tend to address the “problem” rather than the cause. The end result is that the causes continue to generate the same number of problems, and the policies are merely there to catch the casualties. The matter is very much the same as in medicine: Strategies of preventive medicine are much to be preferred to after-the-fact remedies.

From this perspective, many of the controversies surrounding “youth problems” are misplaced. The controversies concern policies such as the “liberal” policy of decriminalizing marijuana vs. the “conservative” policy of maintaining current laws and increasing enforcement; or, policies such as the “liberal” policy of reducing or eliminating punishment for youth offenses vs. the “conservative” policy of increasing the certainty and severity of punishment. But the principal policy efforts, if I am correct about the fundamental deficiencies of urban industrial society for the socialization of youth, should be directed to supplementing the urban social structure so that it ceases to generate the problems. This of course requires understanding of the deficiencies, and how they affect the socialization of youth. The analysis I’ve given here is only a step in that direction; but it does allow one to see some possible steps toward augmenting and supplementing the urban social structure.

### **Infusing life into the built environment**

What then are some of these steps? One, which seems rather straightforward, and is especially relevant to an organization like 4-H, derives from the “lifelessness” of the built environment. It is possible, with planning, to infuse some life into that environment. I am reminded of an exhibit at the Museum of Science and Industry in Chicago. In this, the largest museum of science and technology in the country, the exhibit that attracted most attention and interest among children the last time I visited the museum was neither science nor technology. It was an incubator with many eggs of varying ages, so that there was nearly always a chick or two trying to peck its way out of the shell. And the apparent success of the 4-H program that has been used in some schools involving hatching of chicks exemplifies this interest as well.

But if the analysis I’ve given earlier of the role that live animals play in the lives of children and youth is correct, this means that the appropriate strategies emphasize particular forms of life—animals rather than plants, because of the responsiveness and dependency of animals. And it means establishing in some way a possibility for urban young persons to establish a *relationship* to an animal, as a pet or as a friend. This is not, to be sure, as easy in the city as in rural areas; but it is not impossible. If we can create the extraordinary man-made accomplishments that constitute the built environment, than we can certainly

build into that environment a place for non-human life that will depend upon, respond to, and enrich the life of, our children. The ways this can be done may vary from place to place, and may depend on the imaginativeness of architects and city planners (for *this* is what architects and city planners ought to be about, creating environments that enrich the lives of children and adults, rather than creating aesthetic showpieces). It is interesting that some birds have in fact adjusted themselves to an urban environment. Pigeons are the most obvious example; a more surprising one is a Peregrine falcon which has come to live atop a tall building in Baltimore. But, apart from what architects and city planners do, 4-H is in a unique position to aid in this introduction of life into urban industrial society. The principle that ought to be observed is simple: Import insofar as possible the *activities* developed in agricultural settings into urban areas, *rather than* attempting to find uniquely urban activities that are comparable to the rural ones. I'm referring, of course, primarily to the activities involving animals, but encompassing wildlife as well as domestic animals. Perhaps it's wholly redundant for me to say this, for this is already being done in some places, as the examples I've already referred to of the quail eggs and the horseback riding for handicapped children illustrate. But if the general principle I've stated is recognized, it may be possible to do many more such things, in ways that would be hard for me to imagine.

I should mention here a fortunate circumstance which could, with the right kind of enterprise, be used in conjunction with appropriate 4-H urban projects. This is a new and peculiar but very interesting institution that has grown up in some of our largest cities. It is the city fair, a summer event that is in some respects a counterpart for urban areas to the county fair or state fair for agriculture. These city fairs, only a few years old, have not yet, so far as I am aware, involved projects, exhibits and awards of the sort characteristic of agriculturally-based fairs. But there is no reason they should not offer to urban youth opportunities similar to those that county fairs and 4-H projects have offered to rural youth. Such a development of the city fair exemplifies the general principle I stated earlier: That policies can be created that are directed not at "solving youth problems," but at supplementing and augmenting the urban social structure in positive ways that reduce the incidence of "youth problems." The existence of a large exhibit of 4-H projects by city youth whose home is the ghetto would constitute a striking demonstration of the potential for channeling the energies of these youth into productive directions.

The use of city fairs as opportunities for urban youth is not, of course, limited to activities and projects involving animals. It is equally appropriate for other activities and other projects, both those that are traditional to 4-H and those that are not. But the project, the exhibitions, the awards, could give an opportunity and incentive for productive effort among urban youth that seldom occurs for them.

### **Reconstitution of community**

I have indicated one of the principles upon which socialization of the young in urban industrial society should be based. This is the principle of supplementing the built environment with the living environment, in such a way that it can enrich the lives of young persons. A second, at least as fundamental, is a principle concerning the reconstitution of *community*. It is clear that because of the new social structure of urban industrial society, community in the old sense—that is, in the sense of a geographic or neighborhood-based body of relationships, social norms, expectations, understandings, obligations—does not exist for most adults. The main part of their lives are lived in communities of *interest*, not of residence. For some, the interests are in and around their work, and they form what have been called "occupational communities." For some, the interests are in various kinds of hobbies—but hobbies that are seldom shared by their neighbors. Geographic mobility has made all this possible. Most adults do not live near their work; and for many, their pursuit of leisure is at some distance from home with others who share their community of interest.



These communities of interest have many of the characteristics of geographic communities: members of the community are in relatively frequent interaction with one another, and even when two members are not in contact for some time, they are aware of the other's continuing membership in the community. The community imposes norms and constraints on its members; that is, it regulates their behavior. The community provides recognition of excellence—as defined in that community—and incentives for achieving it. But because these communities are not bound by geography and physical contiguity, as children are, and because they contain as members only restricted age ranges, they are fundamentally different in one respect: they do not constitute agencies of socialization for the young as communities have in agriculturally-based societies. The young are not within them, because membership is not by physical locus, but by interest and by choice—and the young seldom have an opportunity to gain membership.

As an aside, I recall, in an earlier age when I was young and growing up in a community that had some characteristics of a rural agriculturally-based society and some characteristics of the new industrial society, that two important periods of activity for me were generated by my being let into such a community of interest. One was archery and bow-making, which a member of the local adult archery group indoctrinated me into. This was an activity and a skill that I kept and used throughout my youth, long after that association had vanished. The other was that peculiar community of the amateur radio operator—the “ham.” Again a member of that community took an interest in indoctrinating me. And again, that indoctrination was an important experience, in which I learned more about radios and electronics than I ever would have in a school electronics course.

Since the time these two things occurred, when I was young, the distance between youth and adults has grown. The events that initiated those indoctrinations into two communities of interest would be less likely now for many youth. Again, one of the fundamental causes is the “corporate actors” with which adults interact. For many of the communities of interest among adults are now spawned by commercial enterprises and involve high consumption. It may be the consumption of popular music, or watching sports events, or any of a number of other activities; but it is often big business, and often not the kind of low-key, locally-generated activity that is easy for adults to bring youth into. There are many exceptions, of course, and people in 4-H are aware of them. But the “commercialization of leisure,” as it has been called, has had a particularly depressing effect on the potential for adults bringing youth into their communities of interest.

The way these “communities of interest” function, however, suggests that such communities among youth themselves may have special values for the youth within them. As I indicated earlier, communities of interest have many characteristics that geographic communities have, such as norms that constrain their members from disapproved activities, recognition of excellence, and incentives to encourage pursuit of the interest. One sees this in school athletic teams, where the activity justifies imposition of a training discipline, good play for the team is recognized, and the incentives it provides for achievement have been sufficiently strong to change many boys from unruly opponents of school to boys with a positive purpose. And I'm sure that many of you can describe how such communities of interest have functioned for 4-H youth. But what I am saying that's different is this: In an urban industrial society, such communities of interest among youth, focused around a *particular* interest rather than a broad range, are especially important. In a rural setting, the low population density and the need for interaction outside school can justify a club with a broad range in interests. But in an urban setting, population density is high, and social interactions are abundant. What is missing for many youth is an achievement-oriented community, defined by a particular *narrow* activity and interest, which can provide the encouragement and social rewards for productive effort. Some of these interests and activities may be short-lived, others may continue throughout life. Some may be interests and activities that fit well with the capabilities of 4-H; others may not.

If I may speak briefly of some that probably do not fit well with the capabilities of 4-H,



there are certain opportunities for schools, if there were not such fear in our society of "shutting off a child's opportunities." It would be possible to have elementary schools, attended by choice, consisting solely of children training to become violinists, along with learning how to read, write, and do arithmetic. Or elementary schools, attended by choice, in which each child was a budding gymnast, working under the demands and rewards of instructions whose goal was to bring that about. Or intermediate schools and high schools in which each young person was being trained in the exacting skills of art and drawing.

In fact, if I were an educator in charge of a city school district attempting to increase racial integration, this is exactly what I would do—create highly specialized schools, at all levels, each focused around a narrow community of interest, an activity that would make extraordinary demands on the children who chose to continue it, which *deprived* them of a "well-rounded" youth, but which led them to have *one* activity in which they excelled and of which they could be proud. There are youth who are now subject to such intense concentration of effort: Swimmers, musicians, ballet dancers, and gymnasts come most quickly to mind. But in most places and for most youth, such environments within which they might grow simply do not exist. It is only those with dogged single-minded parents for whom this devotion to an intense interest occurs. Yet if the analysis I have given earlier is correct, communities of interest focused around such activities are especially important, as well as especially feasible, for youth in urban industrial society. There are other societies which have learned this, because one can find more such specialized and narrow training centers in other societies. Our concern with "equality of opportunity" seems to forestall any attempts to impose a demanding regime that can generate excellence, and our mania for the broad, well-rounded youth has often led us to bring up youth who have little interest in anything.

The picture I have just painted, of a hundred second graders playing their violins in unison, or another school producing ballets with fifth graders, is not, of course, the future of 4-H. I describe this extreme only to re-emphasize the potential importance of communities of interest as socializing instruments for youth. For implicit in my use of these examples is the assumption that in such a setting and with such well-defined goals children and youth learn more than the activity they concentrate on. They learn many of those qualities of self which are important to a fruitful adulthood.

While these examples may not be directly relevant to 4-H, the general principle, I think, is. The principle is this: That the creation of a community of interest, whether it is a short-lived activity or a longer one, can be an important means for achieving the goals of 4-H in an urban setting.

What I have tried to do this morning is to examine some of the ways in which an urban industrial society is different from a rural agricultural one, and to point to some of the deficiencies of this society for socializing its young into a fruitful adulthood. Then, after analyzing the nature of these deficiencies, I have tried to suggest how some are particularly amenable to the kinds of things 4-H can do, either in its traditional modes, or more often in modes that are modified to be particularly suited to this new kind of society we have created.

What I have *not* done is to indicate what I see as the concrete implications of this analysis for 4-H programs in urban society. This you are far better prepared to do than I. And I would be interested in just what some of these concrete activities might be, as you see it. Some of you may, of course, disagree with the analysis itself. If that is the case, I am reasonably content, for I will have forced you to analyze just how *you* see the differences imposed by this new and challenging, but sometimes monstrous, urban industrial society in which most of us live.





## Nationwide 4-H Staff Development Program

On November 8, 1970, the Extension Committee on Organization and Policy (ECOP) adopted a policy recommending the design and implementation of a comprehensive program of 4-H professional, paraprofessional and volunteer staff development. The Nationwide 4-H Staff Development and Training Program was initiated in 1971. The W. K. Kellogg Foundation, Battle Creek, Michigan, has supported the program from its inception.

The program is conducted cooperatively by the Science and Education Administration, Extension—4-H, U.S. Department of Agricultural and National 4-H Council on behalf of the State Cooperative Extension Services. An ECOP 4-H Subcommittee Standing Committee on Staff Development and Training provides policy and operating guidance.

The program is designed to help Extension professionals, paraprofessionals and adult and teen volunteers gain new knowledge and skills to improve the 4-H curriculum, the quality and efficiency of program delivery and the expansion of opportunities to more youth.

Currently the program consists of three major thrusts: (1) Staff Development and Training workshops designed primarily for state, district and other key staff members, who, in turn, conduct training for other staff; (2) The National 4-H Intern Program for professional and paraprofessional Extension staff and adult and teen volunteer leaders to carry out research or study projects to advance the 4-H program nationwide; (3) Activities designed to explore especially innovative 4-H programs and staff development thrusts.

Application forms and full information on workshops and internships are available from Program Operations, National 4-H Council, 7100 Connecticut Avenue, Washington, D.C. 20015.



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